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For Immediate Release

**Volunteers of America Chesapeake Launches Ministry Service Program by Welcoming Minister to Further Organization's Faith-Based Mission**

*Reverend Sandra Trice Gray Joins Non-profit through Ministry Endowment Grant*

**Lanham, MD** - (July 7, 2010) - Volunteers of America Chesapeake announced today that it has been awarded a two-year Ministry Endowment Grant from the Volunteers of America national office, based in Arlington, VA. This generous grant allows the non-profit to start a new Ministry Service Program and introduce **Reverend Sandra Trice Gray** as Chaplain of Volunteers of America Chesapeake to lead spiritual counseling and development sessions for clients and employees; direct inter-denominational worship services; and provide pastoral care training for ministers on staff, enabling them to offer pastoral care to clients.

"This award helps us meet our faith-based mission of providing a service of ministry in the local communities we serve," said **Russell K. Snyder**, president and CEO of Volunteers of America Chesapeake. "Reverend Gray will help our organization and staff members put God first and recognize how serving Him will help us better serve our clients."

As part of the new Ministry Service Program, Snyder said the organization plans to expand its current commissioned minister base from three to more than 10 this fiscal year. He also plans to start Bible Study and worship services in the fall.

Gray previously served as an ordained interdenominational Volunteers of America minister and the spiritual director of Center of Light and Love, a program focused on helping leaders and others strengthen their relationship with God, engage in spiritual development, and minimize stress in their lives. She has been recognized nationwide as an advocate for diversity and inclusiveness as a member of a delegation of American Women Leaders to the Soviet Union, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, and was chosen as one of America's Top 100 Black Business and Professional Women. Gray was also a member of the President of the United States' Committee on Education Partnerships.

"There is a special place in my heart for the people and work of Volunteers of America," **Gray** said. "I've been passionately committed to this organization for more than 20 years. I am excited and eager to serve as Chaplain of Volunteers of America Chesapeake. I look forward to working and growing spiritually with the organization as we create an active ministry program, honor the sacredness of our work, and seek to serve the highest good of all."

Gray also served as Vice President of Independent Sector, where she provided leadership to 850 charities, foundations, and corporate giving programs, committed to advancing the common good in America and around the world. Prior to her position with Independent Sector, she served as Executive Director of the National School Volunteer Program. She also held roles as Commissioner for Intergovernmental, Interagency and Community Liaison – U.S. Office of Education, as well as Assistant and Policy Advisor to the Under Secretary of Education, and Fellow and Special Assistant to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. Gray was also the first African-American to teach in the desegregated public school system of Little Rock, Ark.

#### **VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA CHESAPEAKE**

*Volunteers of America Chesapeake, founded in 1896 in Baltimore, is the locally chartered affiliate of Volunteers of America, Inc., one of the nation's largest and most comprehensive human services organizations. They accomplish their spiritually based mission by serving over 8,000 people annually through programs spread geographically from Baltimore, Maryland to Virginia Beach, Virginia.*

*Volunteers of America Chesapeake operates 26 programs that serve the homeless, mentally ill, intellectually disabled, ex-offenders, substance abusers, the elderly and children. The professional staff of more than 600 employees, partner with dedicated volunteers, local government officials, businesses, civic organizations and the faith community to provide high quality human services.*

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